

REMARKS

Claims 17-24 and 52-67 are now pending in the above-referenced patent application. In this amendment, claim 21 has been amended in order to more clearly delineate intended subject matter, claims 27-37 and 46-51 have been cancelled, and new claims 52-67 have been added. Assignee does not surrender any subject matter by the cancellation of claims 27-37 and 46-51, and reserves the right to claim subject matter of cancelled claims 27-37 and 46-51 in a continuing application. Additionally, it is respectfully submitted that the foregoing cancellations are not made in response to any cited art or in response to any rejections or objections presented by the Examiner, but, rather, are made in order to allow claims 17-24 and newly added claims 52-67 to proceed to allowance. Accordingly, no subject matter is surrendered through such cancellation, and, therefore, no prosecution history estoppel applies. Further, it is believed that the amendments to claim 21 do not narrow claim scope, and may, in some circumstances, broaden claim scope. Accordingly, no prosecution history estoppel applies. Additionally, it is noted that claims 52-67 include the same allowable subject matter of claims 17-24, but in a different claim form. Accordingly, these claims should be allowable for at least the same reasons as claims 17-24.

Status of Claims

In the Final Office Action, dated March 8, 2006, the Examiner rejected claims 27-37 under 35 U.S.C 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wei et al (US Patent No. 6,515,967) in view of Schwaller et al (US Patent No 6,061,725); and rejected claims 46-51 under 35 U.S.C 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gauthier et al (US Patent No. 5,228,042) in view of Wei et al. These rejections are now moot as claims 27-37 and 46-51 have been cancelled.

Additionally, in the Final Office Action, dated March 8, 2006, the Examiner allowed claims 17-24. Assignee would like to thank the Examiner for finding allowable subject matter. It is respectfully submitted that new claims 52-67 share the same subject matter with allowed claims 17-24. Thus, these claims should be allowable on at least the same basis as claims 17-24. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner enter the amendments to claim 21, and enter new claims 52-67, and allow claims 17-24 and 52-67 to proceed to allowance.

Attorney Docket: 012.P53016

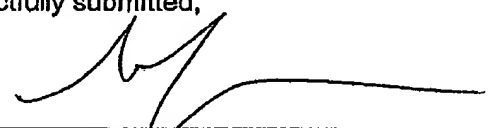
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims pending in this patent application, as amended, are in condition for allowance. If the Examiner has any questions, she is invited to contact the undersigned at (503) 439-6500. Reconsideration of this patent application and early allowance of all the claims is respectfully requested.

Please charge any shortages and credit any overcharges of any fees required for this submission to Deposit Account number 50-3703.

Dated: 5/8/06

Respectfully submitted,



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